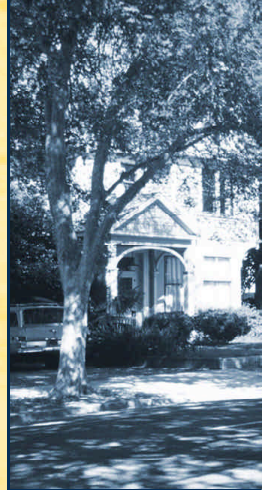
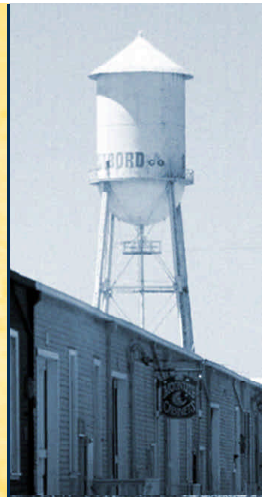


MAY 2002

neighborhood improvement plan

Spartan Keyes



STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS INITIATIVE



Vision Statement

The Spartan Keyes neighborhood consists largely of single-family homes. Architectural styles include classic Victorians from the turn of the century and post-1906 Craftsman-style bungalows. These residential building styles, particularly where combined with tree-lined streets, give Spartan Keyes a traditional and generally attractive neighborhood character. New multifamily housing with more traditional architectural forms have been developed that complement existing homes, however a number of unattractive 1960's era apartment complexes concentrated near Keyes Street detract from the neighborhood aesthetic. The neighborhood's residential areas are separated by the Keyes Street commercial strip, a railroad-related light industrial corridor in the 'East Gardner' area, and a series of very heavily traveled, one- and two-way north-south streets. The neighborhood does not include a single public open space, neighborhood school or community center, nor does it have a concentration of neighborhood-oriented commercial businesses, such as dry cleaners, specialty food services or restaurants.

Despite the physical barriers within the neighborhood and the lack of community-focusing features such as parks, schools, and cafes, Spartan Keyes has developed a thriving and organized community. A variety of artists and San Jose State art department faculty and students live in the area and work in local studios and campus facilities. The Spartan Keyes neighborhood is already a unique environment and connecting the neighborhood to San Jose State University and the SoFA district to the north. The Spartan Keyes Neighborhood Association has promoted a variety of improvement efforts, such as the Neighborhood Garden Project, and been successful at keeping residents involved in the community.

Prior to the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative, the preparation of the *East Gardner Specific Plan* (to be renamed) which will guide the conversion of the heavily industrial East Gardner to a more residentially-oriented community. Together, the *Neighborhood Improvement Plan* and the *East Gardner Specific Plan* promote a vision that unifies the disparate residential areas of Spartan Keyes into a more livable and truly unique neighborhood. Traffic calming efforts reduce traffic speeds on neighborhood streets, encouraging pedestrian and bicycle circulation. On-street parking is preserved for residents. Industrial facilities, auto services, bars, liquor stores and other land uses that detract from neighborhood appearance and property values are phased out and replaced with new development that complements the residential areas. Along the Keyes Street commercial corridor, new development and investment is focused over time to create a neighborhood business district, similar to Lincoln Avenue or The Alameda, with locally-oriented businesses and an inviting streetscape within walking distance of most residents. A neighborhood grocery store and a mix of attractive local restaurants, cafes, and services will enliven this commercial core.

Within the *East Gardner Specific Plan* area, historic older industrial buildings and sites are renovated to accommodate a lively mix of residential, commercial, recreation, education- and arts-oriented uses. Preserved historic buildings such as the American Can Company anchor a community-oriented complex that includes a large

neighborhood park, educational facilities and meeting rooms. The SJSU sculpture and metal work Foundry remains a focus for artisan activity in the area, with workspaces and studios occupying former industrial warehouses and sites. Infill housing accommodates a diverse and growing neighborhood population.

The Spartan Keyes neighborhood encompasses two new parks, one in East Gardner on the west, the other at the Story Road landfill on the east. A combination of active facilities and quiet naturalized areas offer a variety of recreational activities. A continuous trail along Coyote Creek links the neighborhood to nearby Kelley Park and Happy Hollow Zoo as well as to the regional open space network.

Executive Summary

Launched in July 200, the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI) is a partnership between the San Jose City Council, Mayor, residents and business owners. The goal of SNI is to improve neighborhood conditions, enhance community safety, facilitate community services, and strengthen neighborhood associations. The SNI is funded through resources from the City of San Jose Redevelopment Agency, grants, private investments, and public-private partnerships. Spartan Keyes is one of twenty-two neighborhoods in San Jose that have been designated as Strong Neighborhoods Initiative districts.

Vision

The *Neighborhood Improvement Plan* promotes a vision that unifies the disparate residential areas of Spartan Keyes into a safer, more liveable, and truly unique neighborhood. Key elements to the achievement of this vision include; preserving and enhancing the character of established residential areas, encouraging pedestrian circulation, enhancing the local business district and developing community-oriented open space.

Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives relate to specific problems, concerns, or desires identified by the community and the Neighborhood Advisory Committee during the development phase of the *Neighborhood Plan*. The goals listed below generally identify what should be achieved and are intended to guide the efforts by the Spartan Keyes community and City Departments over the long-term. The objectives are contained within the Goals and Objectives chapter of the *Plan*, and describe specific ways of achieving the related goal.

Plan Goals:

- Calm traffic throughout the neighborhood and discourage cut-through traffic on local neighborhood streets as feasible.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation within the neighborhood and to adjacent districts and nearby destination.
- Mitigate the parking effects from San Jose State University, Spartan Stadium, and related special events at adjacent recreational facilities.
- Develop community parks to serve neighborhood residents.
- Improve and maintain remnant open spaces.
- Maintain and expand the community garden network.
- Improve the appearance and physical condition of neighborhood streets.
- Reduce noise levels produced by the adjacent freeway and on-street truck traffic.
- Build on the existing traditional neighborhood character through improvements to residential properties.
- Reduce anti-social activity within the neighborhood.
- Improve conditions beneath and adjacent to freeways to increase safety and create a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

- Reduce the number of homeless encampments under and along I-280, Keyes Street, and along the rail spur.
- Encourage development of public facilities within walking distance of the neighborhood.
- Adjust land use policies to encourage neighborhood-oriented commercial development and infill residential development.

Improvement Plan Concepts

The improvement recommendations for the Spartan Keyes neighborhood are organized under five main categories which represent the plan concepts. Recommended improvements address the neighborhood's physical condition, security, land use and circulation. The concept categories are as follows:

- *Neighborhood Circulation and Parking*
- *Neighborhood Parks and Open Space*
- *Neighborhood Conditions and Maintenance*
- *Neighborhood Security*
- *Neighborhood Development*

Neighborhood Circulation and Parking

A major concern of neighborhood residents is the volume and perceived speed of traffic within the Spartan Keyes area. The proximity of the neighborhood to Interstate 280, Highway 101, San Jose State University, and Spartan Stadium results in significant amounts of non-local through-traffic. Circulation and parking improvements recommendations focus on improving neighborhood-oriented vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle circulation, and preserving on-street parking for residents during special events.

Neighborhood Parks and Open Space

There are no City parks or public open spaces within the Spartan Keyes neighborhood. Throughout the neighborhood planning process, a major objective has been to designate and develop sites for neighborhood-oriented open space and recreation. Residents would like to develop several neighborhood parks which would offer opportunities for both active and passive recreation.

Neighborhood Conditions and Maintenance

The appearance of streets and private properties influences how residents and non-residents perceive and treat the neighborhood. Recommended improvements focus on increasing the overall aesthetic quality of Spartan Keyes while supporting the neighborhood's traditional residential character.

Neighborhood Security

Spartan Keyes residents identified illegal activity related to gangs, alcohol and drugs, as well as pedestrian safety and homeless encampments as neighborhood security issues that need to be addressed. Recommended improvements are intended to promote a safe and comfortable neighborhood environment that supports pedestrian activity and property values.

Neighborhood Development

The *East Gardner Specific Plan* (EGSP) addresses policies for land use and development within the East Gardner area, which covers the western half of the Spartan Keyes neighborhood. Recommendations in this *Neighborhood Plan* expand upon the policies of the EGSP to address the entire Spartan Keyes community. The two plans will work together to establish neighborhood-oriented policies for development and implementation of the neighborhood improvements needed to create a vibrant, livable, urban community.

Action Items “Top Ten”

The “Top 10” Action Items are the most important neighborhood priorities. They reflect the NAC’s weighing of current neighborhood issues, long-term neighborhood vision, and likely cost. Some of the Action Items are capital improvements, such as the development of neighborhood open space. Others are policy or program-oriented, such as revitalization of the neighborhood commercial area. The Top 10 Action Items for Spartan Keyes are as follows:

1. Develop Public Open Space at the Story Road Landfill
2. Prepare and Implement a Neighborhood Traffic Calming Plan
3. Improve the Keyes Street Streetscape
4. Revitalize and Attract Neighborhood Friendly Businesses Along Keyes Street
5. Develop a Neighborhood Park in the East Gardner Area
6. Develop Arts-Oriented Uses in the East Gardner Area
7. Study and Mitigate Neighborhood Noise Levels
8. Improve Access to Elementary Schools
9. Explore Opportunities for a Neighborhood Elementary School
10. Improve the Martha Street Corridor as a Pedestrian/Bicycle Route

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